OXFORD CONFERENCE STUDY SERIES

based on

The Message and Reports of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State

CHURCH AND STATE

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PREFACE TO THE SERIES

For more than a quarter of a century the Christian churches have been drawing together. The impulse given by the great Missionary Conference of Edinburgh, 1910, has borne fruit in two parallel movements: one concerned with the life and work of the Church, the other with its faith and order. These movements culminated in two great conferences, held in Great Britain in the summer of 1937. The first, which was held in Oxford in July, took place under the auspices of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and had for its subject CHURCH, COMMUNITY, AND STATE. It was the successor of the Stockholm Conference of 1925, which inaugurated what has come to be known as the Life and Work Movement. The second was held in Edinburgh in August of the same year under the auspices of the Continuation Committee of Faith and Order, a body which owed its initiation to the Lausanne Conference of 1927. Both Conferences united in recommending to the churches the creation of a World Council of Churches which should carry on the work now being done by the two movements separately.

The Oxford Conference was concerned primarily with the relation of the churches to the world outside, the Edinburgh Conference with their relation to one another. Each considered a number of important questions and made weighty recommendations which concern the churches as a whole. In order to facilitate the study of these recommendations by churches and educational institutions two sets of studies are being prepared: one dealing with Oxford, the other with Edinburgh. The present series, six in number, will be based upon the findings of Oxford. The users of each pamphlet (study) are urged to read the entire text of the report contained in it before commencing the study outlines.

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SALIENT FEATURES OF THE OXFORD CONFERENCE

A most impressive feature of the Conference was the way in which, from the start, it sensed and grappled with the problem of religious freedom in the face of the growing totalitarian state. This was dramatized at the first session when it was announced that for reasons growing out of the internal situation in Germany no representatives of the Evangelical Church of that country would be present. (*) The Conference was deeply moved by this fact and in sending its greetings to the German Christians who were to have shared in its fellowship it crystallized a sentiment that was to be dominant throughout the sessions. The Conference felt that it was meeting under the shadow of a pagan secularism expressing itself in the forms of exaggerated nationalism, imperialism, fascism, and atheistic communism. There was special concern over the way in which the place of religion is usurped by nationalism and racialism and the extent to which the youth to whom the churches would offer Christian culture are being regimented in anti-Christian states.

A major emphasis in the deliberations of the Conference, which appears in the reports, was the disintegration of modern society, the collapse of standards, the disappearance of time-honored sanctions, and the waning of spiritual authority on the part of the Church itself. This mood of crisis and a corresponding urgency toward redemptive action was felt at Oxford from beginning to end.

Not only did the Conference characterize the present era as one of disintegration but it diagnosed contemporary evils as due to the secularization of the spirit and outlook of humanity. Again and again it was proclaimed that humanism, the elevation of man's power and authority to the level of the divine, was responsible for the present condition of society. Thus the ascription to the state of supreme power and the construction of utopias as means whereby man engineers his own salvation—or, to use the phrase of our continental fellow-Christians—the emergence of the "demonic" —were deplored as responsible for the collapse of human values. (What they mean is man's tendency to assign infinite values to certain finite movements.)

Over against this judgment upon human perversity and depravity was the constant emphasis on the sovereignty of God. The divine will was exalted in contrast to the human; the holiness of God was set over against the sinfulness of man. Again and again it was said that our salvation was due to the divine benevolence, not to any intrinsic worth of man.

This judgment upon man's unworthiness led to a mood of repentance and confession which was continued throughout the Conference. It furnished

* At the last moment passports had been denied to the delegates chosen by the German Evangelical Church.

a major theme for the services of worship which were held morning and evening in old St. Mary's Church, where the undivided Western Church had worshipped for five hundred years before the Reformation. Confession was made not only for individual delinquency but for corporate sin, for the failure of the Church to be true to its own witness and to stand against the materialistic drift of contemporary life.

It was in these services of worship that the real experience of unity was found by the Oxford Conference. The delegates went to their plenary sessions in the old Town Hall and to their several sectional meeting places to grapple with problems of theology and social ethics and to face what seemed the almost impossible task of reconciling conflicting views which rested upon widely different, often upon contrary, philosophic assumptions. But out of the confusion, and perhaps at times impatience, engendered in these discussions they returned to St. Mary's for worship to find that Anglicans, Lutherans, Eastern Orthodox, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and all the rest, could worship together and participate in common aspirations, a common repentance, a common intercession and a common dedication. It was at St. Mary's, the delegates agreed, that the *Una Sancta*—the universal Christian fellowship—was realized in fact.

This experience culminated in an inter-communion service celebrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury with which the Conference was brought to a close. It was the first time that an Anglican prelate had administered communion at a great public service of worship to Free Churchmen together with members of his own faith.

The central place of the Church itself in the deliberation of the Conference was unmistakably clear. It was said by a careful observer who was a member of both conferences that there was more discussion of the Church at Oxford than at Edinburgh. This was because the Church was the starting point for Oxford in every one of its studies: the Church and the Community, the Church and the State, and so on, through all the problem areas explored.

It should be noted that the Youth Commission, while it issued no report for publication—indeed, was not asked to do so—made a report to the Conference upon its deliberations which not only revealed the same concern as did the other reports but—and this was most surprising—showed an even greater conservatism. (This illustrated the relatively great interest in Europe in purely theological questions.)

The most concrete outcome of the Conference was the adoption of a proposal for the merger of the Life and Work and the Faith and Order movements in a World Council of Churches, a plan which was transmitted to the Edinburgh Conference and there adopted for submission directly to the churches.

One of the ways in which ideas are spread is through new terms. If we in America are to appreciate the central drive of the Oxford Conference, we must learn the meaning of a word hitherto little used among us—namely, the word "ecumenical." It means world-wide, and as applied in the deliberations at Oxford and also at Edinburgh it signifies "concerning the whole household of the faithful," meaning the entire Christian Church in conscious fellowship. It is a more inclusive term than "Protestant" which because of its negative character and its limited reference is not in favor among those who are working for world-wide Christian unity. The Eastern Orthodox churches, which form so large a part of the movement are, of course, not Protestant. Also, in the Anglican churches, and in a considerable section of the Episcopal Church in America, the word "Protestant" is not in common use. Moreover, while the Church of Rome declined to send official delegates and sent only "observers," the world conference leaders were very desirous that it should not appear that the conferences were anti-Roman. In spirit Oxford and Edinburgh envisaged an ecumenical fellowship from which no Christian body should be excluded.

INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH AND STATE

Among all the subjects considered at Oxford that of Church and State was of central importance. While the report that deals with this subject was shorter than the others, its brevity is not to be taken as a measure of the significance attached to it. On the contrary, there was no report to which longer and more careful consideration was given, none which was subjected to more detailed and rigorous criticism, and none which in its final form was received with a greater measure of unanimity.

The Section to which the Conference referred the consideration of these questions was thoroughly representative. It included members of all the great groups of which the Conference was composed: Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Presbyterian, Reformed, Lutheran, Congregational, Disciples, Baptist, Friends as well as smaller bodies. It included strong believers in establishment and equally strong advocates of the system of separation of Church and State. It was not easy for a company so composed to arrive at a unanimous report without the surrender of conviction. Yet in fact it proved possible.

The Section was fortunate in its Chairman. Professor Max Huber, a Swiss, President of the International Red Cross and a former member of the Hague Court of Arbitration, was a man schooled in international law, and under his guidance every word in the report was subjected to careful examination. Other members of the Section rendered significant service, notably the Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. Lindsay, best known as the Master of Balliol, Professor Emil Brunner of Zurich, and Dr. Ehrenström, Secretary of the Section. We had the benefit of a longer report which had been prepared before the Conference met, but instead of making its text the basis of the Section's report the members preferred to prepare an entirely new document. This report, because of its brevity and the exactness of its language, made possible more careful revision than was practicable with the longer reports of the other Sections. In order to preserve the value of the material contained in the first draft report, the Section instructed its officers to revise it in accordance with the decisions reached by the Section and to print it with the shorter report for purposes of study. Extracts from this longer report have accordingly been included in this pamphlet.

Since the two reports on Church and State were prepared very largely against the background of conditions in other parts of the world, some portions of them and some of the discussion questions in this pamphlet may be remote from the interests of many American Christians. The leaders of the discussion groups are urged to point up the questions with reference to specific current issues in American political life.

II. CHURCH AND STATE

(The report, after receiving the approval of the Section, was submitted to the Conference, substantially in its present form. The Conference received the report, referred it back to the Section for revision in the light of the discussion, and commended it to the serious and favourable consideration of the churches. The report was revised by the Section and approved by it in its present form.)

I. INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM

It is not the purpose of the following memorandum to set forth an abstract doctrine of the relation of Church and State either in sociological, legal, or theological form, but to express the Christian's attitude towards the secularization of modern society and the growing power of the State which present problems to the intelligence of Christians and lay burdens upon their consciences.

The purpose of this memorandum is to enquire what problems the existing situation presents to Christians both in their individual and in their corporate capacity, and to distinguish those principles and duties which determine the Christian attitude towards the State in all circumstances from the various applications of those principles and duties which are relevant to the different historical situations.

II. STANDPOINT

1. Fundamental Considerations

We speak as Christians; that is (*a*) as members of the Church as the body of Christ, the universal supra-national fellowship which He has called into being through His word and spirit, or, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, the Holy Catholic Church, and (*b*) as members of the many particular Churches: congregational, denominational, national, free, or established, or other forms of the Christian society, in which the life of the one Church finds varying expression.

It follows (*a*) that our witness must be based upon the revelation which God has given us in Jesus Christ and in conformity with His word in the Scripture; and (*b*) that as human beings subject to the limitations of finiteness and the guilt of sin we share responsibility for the evils of our time, and must approach the subject of our relation to the State in a spirit of repentance.

We recognize that, both as members of individual Churches and as members of the Church universal, we are related to the particular States of which we are members, not only directly as, e.g., by establishment or concordat but primarily through the people of whom the State whatever may be its constitutional structure, is the political organ: it follows that

the special duties and responsibilities of the Church with reference to the State are conditioned by all the aspects of the social life of man, economic, cultural, etc., with which both Church and State alike have to do.

We recognize the existing States as historically given realities, each of which in the political sphere is the highest authority, but which, as it stands itself under the authority and the judgment of God, is bound by His Will and has the God-given aim of upholding law and order, of ministering to the life of the people united within it or of the peoples or groups who are so united, and also of making its contribution to the common life of all peoples.

At the same time we recognize that the State as a specific form and the dominating expression of man's life in this world of sin, by its very power and its monopoly of the means of coercion, often becomes an instrument of evil. Since we believe in the holy God as the source of justice, we do not consider the State as the ultimate source of law but rather as its guarantor. It is not the lord, but the servant of justice. There can be for the Christian no ultimate authority but very God.

The State so defined has a dual relationship to the Church both as an order within which Christians have to live and witness for Christ, and as an institution which by its actions may either promote or hinder the mission of the Church, to which therefore the Church in differing historical situations may be called to take differing positions either of co-operation, criticism, or opposition. And this both in its corporate capacity and as a fellowship of witnessing Christians acting either as individuals or as groups.

2. The Present Situation with reference to Church and State

While the principles which define the Christian attitude towards the State remain always the same, their application has constantly varied in different countries and ages. And this not only because of changes in the organization and policy of differing States but of similar changes in differing branches of the Church. In any discussion of the relation of Church and State, therefore, the historical situation must always be considered.

In the course of history Church and State have taken very different attitudes towards each other, varying from the most intimate combination to complete indifference or antagonism. At the present time also their relations differ widely.

Furthermore, we have to distinguish, e.g., between (*a*) States and countries with a predominantly Christian population; (*b*) States and countries with a population which is chiefly or at least largely dechristianized; (*c*) States and countries where Christianity appears as the religion of a minority in a country with a non-Christian civilization; and again between (*d*) Churches which either completely or to a certain extent are organized independently of the State, and (*e*) Churches which are established.

There are two facts characteristic of the present situation which lay upon the Church the duty of reconsidering its relation to the State and

redefining its practical attitude. These are (*a*) the growing dechristianization of society and (*b*) the widespread tendency of the State to control the totality of human life in all its individual and social aspects, combined with the tendency to attribute absolute value to the State itself, to the national community, to the dominating class, or to the prevailing cultural form.

3. The Church's Need of Repentance and of Reconsecration

The supreme duty of the Churches in all countries as they face the present situation in the world of States and nations is to repent before God, not only by corporate acts of repentance, but by awakening the spirit of repentance in all their members: repentance for things done and things left undone. Judgment must begin at the House of God. If as Christians we are deeply disquieted by the political development of our age and our time, we have to acknowledge a large share of responsibility. We have not lived up to the Word of our Lord, "Ye are the salt of the earth and the light of the world." We have not expressed our faith in the redeeming Cross of Christ in terms of our social relations. We have accepted without clear protest existing social divisions. In like manner we recognize that Churches have at times substituted for the true totalitarianism of Christ, which requires that every activity and every relation should be subject to the Will of God, a forced totalitarianism, political in character. They have too often been far more concerned for their own security and prestige in this world than for fulfilling their Lord's commission and serving mankind in the spirit of self-sacrificing love. We to-day acknowledge with deep humility our share in this guilt.

With repentance must go reconsecration. Penitence, if sincere, must bear fruit in action. We therefore resolve by God's grace to do our utmost to prevent the repetition of such sins in the future; to discharge our duties as citizens in the spirit of Christian love; and, so far as in us lies, to create a spirit which will enable the State to fulfil its God-given task of maintaining justice and ministering to the welfare of the people.

III. PRINCIPLES

1. The Distinctive Functions of Church and State

The Church as the trustee of God's redeeming Gospel and the State as the guarantor of order, justice, and civil liberty have distinct functions in regard to society. The Church's concern is to witness to men of the realities which outlast change because they are founded on the eternal Will of God. The concern of the State is to provide men with justice, order, and security in a world of sin and change. As it is the aim of the Church to create a community founded on divine love, it cannot do its work by coercion, nor must it compromise the standards embodied in God's commandments by surrender to the necessities of the day. The State, on

the other hand, has the duty of maintaining public order, and therefore must use coercion and accept the limits of the practicable.

The distinctive character of the Church's activity is the free operation of grace and love. The distinctive character of the State's activity, whatever its constructive function in the cultural and social life may be, is the power of constraint, legal and physical. In consequence there are certain social activities which clearly belong to the Church, others which clearly belong to the State; there are, however, still others which may be performed by either Church or State. In this area tension is unavoidable and solutions will vary in varying historical circumstances. It is true that Our Lord told His disciples to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. But it is God who declares what is Caesar's. Therefore, whatever the choice may be, the Christian must always, whether as a member of the Church or as a citizen, obey the Will of God.

2. Duties of the Church to the State

The primary duty of the Church to the State is to be the Church, namely, to witness for God, to preach His Word, to confess the faith before men, to teach both young and old to observe the divine commandments, and to serve the nation and the State by proclaiming the Will of God as the supreme standard to which all human wills must be subject and all human conduct must conform. These functions of worship, preaching, teaching, and ministry the Church cannot renounce whether the State consent or not.

From this responsibility certain duties follow for the Churches and for their members.

a. With reference to the individual State:

(I) That of praying for the State, its people and its government;

(II) That of loyalty and obedience to the State, disobedience becoming a duty only if obedience would be clearly contrary to the command of God.

(III) That of co-operation with the State in promoting the welfare of the citizens, and of lending moral support to the State when it upholds the standards of justice set forth in the Word of God;

(IV) That of criticism of the State when it departs from those standards;

(V) That of holding before men in all their legislation and administration those principles which make for the upholding of the dignity of man who is made in the image of God;

(VI) That of permeating the public life with the spirit of Christ and of training men and women who as Christians can contribute to this end.

These duties rest upon Christians not only as individuals redeemed by Christ who must witness for Him in whatever position they may occupy in the State, but also upon the Church as a Christian community. The Church can serve the State in no better way than by illustrating in its own life the kind of life which is God's Will for society as a whole. Only in the measure that it seeks to realize this mission is it in a position to rebuke the State for its sins and failures for which both individual Christians and the Church in its organized capacity have been in no small measure responsible.

b. With reference to the State in its relations to other States:

In the interpretation of these duties it is important to keep in mind that as the Church in its own sphere is a universal society, so to Christian faith the individual State is not itself the ultimate political unit, but a member of a family of nations with international relations and duties which it is the responsibility not only of the individual Christians but also of the Churches to affirm and to promote.

3. The Freedom of the Church

In a State which is Christian by profession it is self-evident that the Church should be free to the fullest extent to fulfil its function.

It should also be evident that where in such a State there are majority and minority Churches the same essential liberty to carry out the Church's function should be enjoyed by minorities as well as by the majority. All Churches should renounce the use of the coercive power of the State in matters of religion. Membership in a minority Church should not be a reason for denying full civil and political equality.

In countries where the Church finds in the theory and constitution of the State nothing on which to base a claim to right, this does not absolve the Church from its primary duty of witness. This duty must then include a witness against such a denial of fundamental justice. And if the State tries to hinder or suppress such witness, all other Churches have the duty of supporting this Church and giving it the utmost succour and relief in their power.

We recognize as essential conditions necessary to the Church's fulfilment of its primary duty that it should enjoy (*a*) freedom to determine its faith and creed; (*b*) freedom of public and private worship, preaching and teaching; (*c*) freedom from any imposition by the State of religious ceremonies and forms of worship; (*d*) freedom to determine the nature of its government and the qualifications of its ministers and members, and, conversely, the freedom of the individual to join the Church to which he feels called; (*e*) freedom to control the education of its ministers, to give religious instruction to its youth, and to provide for adequate development of their religious life; (*f*) freedom of Christian service and missionary activity, both home and foreign; (*g*) freedom to co-operate with other Churches; (*h*) freedom to use such facilities, open to all citizens

or associations, as will make possible the accomplishment of these ends, as, e.g., the ownership of property and the collection of funds.

The freedom essential for the Church can in fact exist both in Churches organized as free associations under the general laws of a country or as established Churches in an organic or otherwise special connection with the State. If, however, this connection should result in impairing the Church's freedom to carry out its distinctive mission, it would then become the duty of its ministers and members to do all in their power to secure this freedom, even at the cost of disestablishment.

4. The Present Tasks of the Church

What then follows from this survey as to the present tasks and opportunities of the Churches? This at least, that it is their duty (*a*) to summon their own members to repentance, both as individuals and organized bodies, for their sins of omission and of commission and to pray for the spirit of consecration which shall make of them, both in their separate and in their united activities, agents which God may use for His purpose in the world; (*b*) to create within the local community, the nation, and the world such agencies of co-operative action as shall make it possible for them to discharge effectively such tasks as can be done in common; (*c*) to summon their individual members in their several callings, not only their clerical but also their lay members, men and women, to co-operate with the State in such constructive tasks as may be for the good of the whole; (*d*) to guard for all Churches, both as groups of witnessing Christians and in their organized capacity, the opportunity of worship, of witness, of service, and of education which is essential to their mission, and this not for their own sake only, but for the sake of the State; (*e*) to follow with sympathetic interest the fortunes of those, Christians and non-Christians, who are victims of cruelty and oppression, and to do what they can to secure for them a treatment compatible with the dignity of their human personality as children of God; (*f*) to renounce publicly and for ever the use of all forms of persecution, whether by Christians against other Christians, or by Christians against adherents of other religions.

EXTRACTS FROM LONGER REPORT ON CHURCH AND STATE

(The report from which the following extracts are taken is based on the printed draft report issued in advance of the Conference to its members. This draft report was fully discussed in the Section and regarded as on the whole a satisfactory statement. It was agreed by the Section that in addition to the shorter report presented to the Conference there should also be a longer document based on the original draft. The Section instructed its officers to prepare this revised draft of the memorandum in accordance with certain instructions given by the Section, and in the light of the discussions both in the Section and in the plenary session of the Conference when the report was presented. Owing to the shortness of the time in which the task had to be undertaken, the revision is less complete than had been intended, and the present report is to a large extent the original report with a considerable number of alterations and additions resulting from the discussions at Oxford.)

I. THE PRESENT SITUATION

One of the outstanding facts in the present world-situation is the increasing significance of the State in the total life of mankind. This shows itself not only in a great expansion of the area of its competence, but in a far-reaching glorification, and even religious exaltation, of the State, its symbols, and its representatives. This situation can be judged from many different standpoints, and as many different practical attitudes will result. Our specific standpoint is that of the Christian Church.

* * * * *

Disintegration and Reintegration in the Modern World

Generally speaking, one can describe the situation as a mixture of far-reaching disintegration and attempts at totalitarian reintegration.

Thinking men and women all over the world are increasingly coming to the conclusion that the present disintegration of inherited institutions and values, and the birth-pangs of new forms of human behaviour and community life, are not merely one of the usual, recurring cycles of depressions; they are a sign of a deep-seated change in the whole of human life. The World War and the period which followed it have revealed the break-up of Western civilization; a break-up the repercussions of which have affected other parts of the world and other civilizations. The industrialization, and mechanization of life, as it has developed under the influence of the amazing progress of natural science during the last hundred years, not only betokens social progress, but also gives rise to more doubtful consequences. The inherited social bonds and forms of community, which gave the individual standing ground and an organic connection with life, have been subjected in our time through excessive urbanization and active world trade, to a continuous disruption. Morality and custom, which gave

to the community a stable structure and to the individual security and a sense of direction derived from the legacy of wisdom bequeathed by his forefathers, have been widely undermined by new ideals and ways of thought. The growth of natural communities, in which man could be in the full sense of the term at home, has been restricted or destroyed by the chance agglomeration of isolated individuals into anonymous masses, in which dull resignation or revolutionary resentment is the prevailing temper.

But the dialectical character of the historical process is also recognizable to-day. It would give a one-sided picture if we were to emphasize only the aspect of disintegration. Powerful currents are flowing in the opposite direction and impelling towards new forms of community. The inborn longing of man for community and loyalty sets itself against the unchartered freedom and individualistic atomism of our day. These movements none the less are apt to fall into the other extreme. The efforts to find a way out of the intolerable strain and difficulty of the life of our day also tend, unconsciously or expressly, to deny the positive achievements of past generations. In many places the ideals of freedom, equality, self-determination, and tolerance, and the newly awakened ideals of authority, obedience, sacrifice, and surrender to the whole are regarded as mutually exclusive. Closely bound up with this is the fact that the various forces which are seeking to check the process of widespread disintegration concentrate upon a particular section of life which is declared to be the center of a new order to the exclusion of all others. The class, the people, the State, or some other entity is given an absolute value. It demands and receives full surrender and unconditional loyalty.

The process of disintegration and reintegration is found in very different forms in individual countries and parts of the world, and is felt with varying degrees of intensity. The continent of Europe, which was the scene of the World War, has been most deeply affected. Other countries, in which the forms of the State taken over from the nineteenth century have suffered little change, and where the breakdown of inherited forms of life has not affected the classes that have been politically and culturally in the ascendant, find themselves—or believe themselves to be—in a position of relative stability. But even here signs of an epochal change—social, political, moral—are recognizable.

* * * * *

The Emergence of Totalitarian Tendencies

The dangerous character of this general intensification of the power of the State, both in theory and practice, is due to the fact that in many countries it is connected with a totalitarian claim. It is true, of course, that at earlier periods in history the State has sometimes extended its claim beyond the political and legal sphere into the sphere of personal and social life. The principle of sovereignty, which is essential to the modern state, is potentially totalitarian. In the age of absolutism and religious intolerance the State exercised its influence over wide spheres of personal and corporate

life, and the democratic and liberal movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were essentially a reaction against this absolutism. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with their economic and social problems and the increased financial power of the State, came to believe more and more in the effectiveness of State regulation. Yet it was only during and after the World War that this tendency extended once more to the spiritual sphere, claiming the right to mold man as a whole. In a number of countries, where the disintegration of the community had reached an advanced stage, the total unification of community life, with the help of all the means of political power, was felt by many people to be the only way out of the threatened chaos.

It would, however, lead to a false judgment if we only spoke of totalitarian tendencies in connection with certain countries. It is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that the totalitarian state is only the political expression of a tendency which can just as well take other forms and have other points of crystallization. Even in countries where the ruling ideas are those of liberalism and democracy, economic and political forces are at work which must lead to a rigid control of economic life, of public opinion, of national habits, and in general to a greater unification of the national being. Even where the State does not seek to influence men directly but leaves wide room for the activities of religious and other formative societies, such tendencies are none the less noticeable. The steadily growing submission of citizens to public education and services, the unifying influence, often unconscious, which the ruling social group exerts over the whole of society, lead in fact to a uniformity of spirit and of behaviour. The universal nature of totalitarianism becomes even more strikingly evident when we consider its close relation to war. The World War meant for the belligerent nations an experiment in the total unification of the functions of society on a scale hitherto almost unknown. So, too, anxiety about the next war, and the military necessity of preparing the people over a long period of time for this terrible possibility, is a powerful incentive to totalitarian development.

* * * * *

The Need for Repentance and Reconsecration

Such a diagnosis of the present life of the State does not give the Church any reason to indulge in a pharisaical complacency. The Church itself is involved in this whole situation. It is itself part and parcel of this lost world, with its absolutisms and its heresies, its inadequacy and its rebellion against God. The Church is forced to recognize that the present situation, with all its suffering and its distress, with all its despairing attempts to create in its own strength a world apart from God, is a judgment upon itself. It must recognize, in the totalitarianism of the present day, an indictment of its own individualism and false spirituality. Its inward weakness and division, its lack of trust in the power of its Lord to conquer the evil in the heart of man and in the world, its unreadiness to face the facts

and the problems of a new period in history, have to a great extent prevented it from proclaiming the good news of the divine salvation with convincing authority. The Church has taken too little trouble to show, and to make visible in its own life, the meaning of the fact that "the Kingdom of God is among you."

* * * * *

II. THE CHRISTIAN SANCTION OF THE STATE

Throughout the centuries the Christian conscience has continually insisted that, whatever view may be taken of the political order, it is not a sphere of action unrelated to God. It has held firmly to the witness of the Bible that God is at work even in political life. It has regarded the paradoxical attitude of the early Christians as in accordance with reality. On the one hand the New Testament regards the State as a divine institution which has a definite part to play in the divine plan of salvation. On the other hand it points to diabolical forces at work in the political sphere. These affirmations of faith that the exercise of the political function is a manifestation of the divine will, and that it is none the less constantly being perverted and misused, are fundamental for our view of politics and have important consequences. The State has a divine sanction. Its authority and its dignity are based upon this fact. But it is not an end in itself nor a final end. It exists to serve the purposes of God. Thus all political action is confronted by the inevitable alternative, whether it is to be an instrument of, or an obstacle to, the gracious rule of God.

When, however, we try to develop this fundamentally Christian view of the State in greater detail we find differences of opinion. Many Christians regard the State as an expression of the divine law which penetrates the universe as a whole. The State is an order based upon the need of men for social life and serves the purpose of ensuring order, peace, and temporal welfare for the community. The divine law in the nature of things is both the origin and the criterion of all political life. It is an idea which lays practical obligations upon mankind. But only in the Church does the higher meaning of the State become evident. The State is a temporal means for guiding man toward his supernatural end.

There is another view which also derives the authority of the State from the divine moral world order. The moral obligations which are written in the conscience of all men are to be realized in the State. The State serves the divine purpose by realizing the ideals of humanity—freedom, equality, and universal well-being—and by guaranteeing to all men the most favourable external conditions for their free self-development.

A third view lays special emphasis upon the connection between the State and the nation, and the nation is regarded as the pre-eminent form of social life, established by God himself. In this view the nation is conceived as the social form of human life which transcends all others. The State is the organization of the national community and it is the agent by which its historical mission is achieved. Since by its sovereignty it protects and furthers

the undisturbed development of the national character, it must be recognized by the Christian Church as an instrument of the divine will manifested in history.

In a fourth view the main stress is laid on the element of coercion in the State, and on the radical disintegration which continually threatens the community through the presence of human sinfulness and social evil. The State is regarded as a dyke to keep out the floods of chaos, as a harsh and indispensable instrument of the divine will which makes possible a relatively peaceful and humane life. It belongs to the paradoxical nature of the State that in its exercise of force it seems to be absolutely opposed to the Christian virtues of love, humility, and gentleness, and yet that it must be accepted as a well-fitted instrument of the sovereign will of God for the prevention of disaster. The authority and legal order of the State is the one fixed point on which in the fallen world the whole social order depends.

III. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS THE STATE

a. Christian Loyalty to the State

The responsibility of the Church and of its members towards the State is grounded in its obedience to God. The attitude of Christians to the actual States in which they live will in consequence have a double character. It will be both positive and at the same time critical. It is a Christian duty to cooperate in the shaping of the political order through prayer, obedience, and active participation. But both unqualified submission to the prescriptions of the authorities and a passive indifference to political issues are irreconcilable with the conviction that God is the unconditional Lord of this sphere of human life. Members of the Church are the apostles of a righteous and loving God, and they must take the lead in courageous criticism, in the realistic testing of political ideals and methods by their contribution to the common good, and in an unceasing struggle for a fuller realization of the demands of justice and love both in legislation and in administration, both in local and in national government. If individual Christians or groups are compelled for the sake of conscience and after consultation with their fellow-Christians to disobey measures taken by the State, the Church, whether national or supra-national, should stand by them and thereby show the solidarity of the community of faith. Where circumstances permit, it should make representations to the State with a view to a removal of the difficulties. A controversial question which has again become acute in many parts of the world and calls for earnest attention is the question at what points disobedience to the commands of the State becomes a Christian duty, and by what means it should find expression—e.g., how far the use of political pressure, or even of revolutionary methods, in distinction from passive resistance, is legitimate for the attainment of social ends which appear from the Christian standpoint to be necessary.

The Church has thus a direct and positive responsibility for the State and for its proper functioning. In this connection three large groups of questions make a special appeal to the Christian conscience. These are the Christian concern for the maintenance of law and justice, the exercise of force in the political sphere, and the task of the State in the cultural life of the community.

b. The Christian Concern for the Maintenance of Law and Justice

The exercise of political power is, in the Christian view, not an end in itself. It is subordinate to the claim of God to be sovereign Lord, and is to be used for His purposes. The message of the Old and the New Testaments, as well as the message of the Church throughout the centuries, expresses this conviction by saying that justice is the directive and limiting norm of all political conduct. In political strife, where one claim is opposed by another, what matters finally is the justice of God and His claim. This fundamental conviction leads to far-reaching conclusions. It relegates all political and social conflict to a secondary plane, and removes its sting, since it commits the result to the hidden decision of God. It is at the same time a powerful incentive to the struggle for greater justice in all spheres of life.

For many Christians, justice as a political norm consists in giving to every man his due in his actual situation and his actual need. The principle of *suum cuique* and the norms of natural law which can be derived from it, are regarded as the standard for the legal order of the community both in the relation of the citizens to one another and also in the relation between the State and its citizens. These principles of natural law, which struggle for realization in the legal organization of the community, are derived from the divine law which inspires and holds together the whole order of the universe. Justice, therefore, can never mean the mere affirmation of existing social and economic conditions. In the dynamic course of history the eternal order of the divine justice is ever struggling for fresh expression. Therefore the maintenance of law and order means an unceasing adjustment to the eternal order of law, and this in turn means a constantly renewed adjustment of the various social rights and duties for the sake of the common good.

Other Christians, however, would deny that this attempt to interpret justice in terms of the *suum cuique* throws any light upon the specifically Christian conception of law and order. Rather, they would say, we must seek the criteria for Christian judgment and action in political matters in the revealed will of God. Some find decisive standards in the precepts and statements of the Bible, above all in the Ten Commandments. Others lay more emphasis upon the paradoxical and, indeed, antithetical relation between the principle of justice and that self-sacrificing love which Christ has revealed in His life and death as the will of God. They regard the law as a definite way of ordering the relation between individuals and groups in the community—primarily as a barrier against human caprice and arrogance. The system of law, moreover—inasmuch as it defines and limits the spheres of power in relation to one another and gives to the

institutions of the community stability, constancy, the power of planning for the future, and security—is a protection from the danger of anarchy. Finally, the critical principle of justice, which is ever at work within the law, is a force continually making for improvement. But even justice is not the highest end of political life but always something that falls short of the highest. It is always pointing in hidden ways to something which it cannot itself achieve, namely, that fellowship of divine love where there is no adjustment of rights and claims, because surrender and mutual service is regarded as the supreme law. But this does not mean that the legal order is superfluous for the Christian. Since he is still a sinner, he needs it as a help and as a restraint. The sovereignty of Christ in and through His Church transcends, it is true, all earthly legal orders, but at the same time it penetrates into them with its sanctifying and transforming influence. Hence the hidden meaning of the order of law is only fulfilled where the many difficult tasks and responsibilities of political life are subordinated to the command of the living and holy God, since "love is the fulfilment of the law."

c. The Place of Force in the Political Sphere

The most difficult problem for the Christian conscience in political life is the use of force as a means of asserting the political will to power against all opposition. This conflict between Christian love and the use of force reaches its tragic climax in war. The great expansion of the activity of the State, and the consequent dependence of men, both in their personal life and in their economic existence, on political factors, combined with the methods of influencing the masses provided by modern technique, have made it possible for the State to subject its citizens in a new way, not only to physical pressure, but also to moral and spiritual pressure. All these new developments make it necessary that fresh thought should be given to the traditional doctrine of the "sword" of the State, and to the question of the legitimacy and limits of the use of force.

The necessity for the use of force, however difficult and morally questionable it may be, must be admitted in principle, since without it the State would not be able to maintain the system of law and order which it protects. But there is much well-grounded difference of opinion on the question whether certain kinds of force are, under all circumstances, forbidden to the Christian, and at what point, in concrete instances, the line should be drawn; these differences come out particularly clearly in opinions about war. But in spite of these differences, there is a settled Christian conviction that the use of force, however unavoidable it may be for the fulfilment of the distinctive tasks of the State, is in itself absolutely opposed to the love commandment, and that it can only be used in the certainty of divine forgiveness. It is, therefore, part of the political responsibility of the community to watch the ends for which the State uses its power, and also to see that the use of force is reduced to a minimum. Further, it should be insisted that the exercise of force, apart from exceptional instances of extreme emergency, should take place within the framework of generally

accepted law, and should remain the exclusive monopoly of the organs of the State, in order that it should not become the instrument either of caprice or of the private and collective lust for power.

d. The Function of the State in the Cultural Life of the Community

Another question which has become increasingly urgent in the modern State, is that of the responsibility of the State for the cultural life of the community, in the widest sense of the word. Control by the State of culture and national morality is no new phenomenon. The ancient "Polis" is a typical example of this view of the State. On the contrary, it may be maintained that the partial release of these spheres from State control within the liberal State represents something new in political history. It is in any case an incontestable fact that the contemporary State is not content merely to protect the varied life of the community, by means of its political and legal organization, but claims the right to direct the mind and heart of the nation along definite lines. The extent to which this takes place, of course, varies greatly.

The claim of the State to control the cultural life and to monopolize popular education, public opinion, and the character-training of its citizens, creates a serious issue for the Church. The situation which it has to meet is that the State may develop into a secularized Church with a world view of its own. The problem is one of the first urgency, to which Christian thought must be directed with far greater energy than has yet been shown.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY

a. The Nature of the Problem

The modern growth of non-Christian forms of totalitarianism, whether these find their center in class or race or nation, or in some other special segment of life, has brought strongly into the foreground the question of sovereignty and freedom of the limits of political control. The point at which the Church comes into immediate conflict with the totalitarian tendencies of the State is where these tendencies are inspired by a myth and a religious or pseudo-religious claim on the unconditional devotion of men, or, in other words, where these tendencies attempt to be a substitute for the Church. In many countries the atempt is being made by direct political pressure or by the pressure of public opinion or by other more subtle methods to inoculate the Church with the ruling ideology. Elsewhere also there is found a tendency through the use of political measures to curtail the freedom of the Church at one point or another and to impose on it fetters which restrict the free carrying out of its mission. The Church has in these circumstances an immediate interest in the limitation of the authority of the State in order that it may be free to carry out its special task.

This development in the direction of an extension of political influence and authority may be observed also in other spheres. The relation of the State and freedom has to-day become a burning question in regard to the

family, science, public morals, and philosophical outlook. With growing insistence, therefore, the question is addressed to the Church of its witness and action when human personality is denied, when truth and right are subordinated to utilitarian ends, or when the State arbitrarily, by physical or moral pressure, deprives men of their own independent life. It is indispensable that the Church should clarify its mind in regard to the grounds on which it regards human freedom in general even over against the State as a special concern of its own, and in regard to the measures which it ought to take to conserve this freedom. What is at stake is the Christian understanding of man. It is on this point that the Chrisian teaching regarding the worth and freedom of man has a decisive importance, since it to a large extent must determine the attitude of the Church to all political measures which do not directly touch the exercise of its own functions by the Church.

b. The Freedom of the Church in its Different Functions

In thinking of the Church, more particularly in relation to the State, we tend under the influence of earlier habits of thought to think in the first instance of the contrast between a State Church and a free Church. We think, that is to say, of the organic and legal connection between Church and State and of the degree of State supervision of the churches. This was natural so long as the State acknowledged the fact of the Church and of the Christian Faith, but when the State, as a result of secularization, adopted more and more a neutral or aloof attitude to Christianity and to the churches, or rejected the Christian Faith altogether, or attempted to subordinate it to its own aims and world-view, questions of *jura in sacra* and *jura circa sacra* became of secondary importance. Here we are concerned primarily with the freedom of the Church which is necessary for its own existence, quite apart from the question whether the Church is organically connected with the State or is a free organization legally recognized or tolerated by the State.

The Church as the messenger of the Gospel, and as the community in which freedom in God is a living reality, represents the ultimate boundary against totalitarian tendencies of every kind. The existence of the Church is a barrier to every attempt to build a common life on a purely secular basis. The Church is free in so far as it is true to its Lord, and it must maintain this freedom against all the claims and temptations of the world. Hence, the freedom of the Church cannot be given from the outside by the State. The most that the State can do is to give the Church legal protection. When this takes place the Church will gratefully accept it as a conscious or unconscious tribute of the political authorities to the sovereignty of its Lord. But when this freedom is restricted, the conflict between Church and State becomes acute. For the Church demands freedom to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind, and in all spheres of life, not for its own sake, but because it has received this commission from God, who is also Lord of the State.

This freedom of the Church, which it must in case of necessity defend against encroachment of the State, includes all the functions which are necessary for carrying out its own commission. It is this public character of the Church which makes the whole problem so difficult. Secret communion with God in prayer and worship cannot be attacked by the State, but the public proclamation of the Gospel and its application to the whole sphere of Christian life can be restricted and hindered by the State in various ways.

First in importance comes the public proclamation of the Christian message. Since this message lays bare the self-assertion of the world and its denial of its Creator, and proclaims the new salvation wrought by God in Christ, it is directed to mankind as a whole. Hence, the Church cannot refrain from using all available methods of public communication such as speech, print, the Press, and broadcasting. This freedom includes as a matter of course opportunities for common worship and of association for Church purposes apart from periods of ordinary public worship. The conduct of foreign missions must also be included among the fundamental functions of the Church.

Under modern conditions, in which the secularized community is emancipating itself from Christian influence in its motives and standards, it is of decisive importance for the future of the Church that it should be allowed to bring up and educate its own members in the spirit of Christianity.

The freedom which the Church must claim includes also its service of love to those who are in need, to the sick, and to the oppressed. It must include further the opportunity of co-operation through its members in the transformation of the social order in the light of the Divine Will.

The religious discharge of this task presupposes that the Church is able to regulate its external forms of church order and administration according to its own principles, whether with or without the understanding and support of the State authorities. This requirement is of special importance for the existence of ecclesiastical minorities, since they are most readily exposed to the danger of interference in their life by the State or by a Church representing the majority or by a particular ecclesiastical group through the exercise of political pressure.

c. The Christian Interest in Human Freedom in General

In regard to the responsibility of the Church for the maintenance of human freedom, its extent, and the means and ways of its realization, there exists considerable disagreement among Christians. Attention may be briefly directed to three conceptions which have their roots in profound theological differences.

For many Christians the unhindered self-development of the personality is the starting-point of their thought about these questions. The State exists for the sake of the free man. The independence of the individual person and his freedom to fulfil himself in accordance with the imminent

laws of his being is the decisive limit of the State. Since, according to this view, personal individuality is the highest good in history, every political and legal measure which infringes on the personal life is unjustified. It is plainly one of the primary responsibilities of the Church to further this unhindered freedom of every man and to protect it against attacks from the side of the State, since it is the Gospel itself that proclaims with insuperable clearness the infinite worth of the individual soul. The Church has no right to demand for itself greater freedom in the political sphere than freedom for the human person, for the family, for economic activity, and the various cultural and other associations.

Other Christians would maintain a precisely opposite point of view—namely, that there are no specifically Christian grounds and standards for the limitation of the State so long as the essential tasks of the Church itself are not involved. Christian freedom is an inner or eschatological freedom to which it is irrelevant how far the State extends its claim in the sphere of the social life. The freedom of the natural man and his subordination to the commands of the State is a matter of political responsibility. How far, for example, the State controls and guides economic effort and how in its legislation it regulates the position of national and racial minorities are matters that belong to the sphere of political expediency. The Church has no authority to demand in the name of the Gospel any rights either for individuals or for human associations. That is not to say that the State has an unlimited competence. The limits of its authority, however, have to be decided not from the standpoint of the Gospel or of the claims of the individual, but from that of the responsibility of the State to order and protect the common life. Without presuming to interfere in the province of political authority the Church must make it its concern to care for the oppressed and persecuted in compassionate love.

The majority of Christians, however, with whatever differences in detail, would regard a third conception as more in harmony with the nature of the Gospel. They would neither agree with the view that the freedom of the Church is nothing more than a special instance of human freedom in general, nor with the view that it is not the business of the Church to take part after its own fashion in the unending struggle for a just equilibrium between political sovereignty and human freedom. The Church has indeed no interest in the unrestricted expression of all possible forms of human activity. It knows the demonic impulses which belong to fallen man and which constantly transform freedom into license, and consequently when the State fails through weakness to protect one against the arbitrary conduct of another it must be a matter of serious concern to the Church. On the other hand the Church knows that man has been created in the image of God and has, therefore, an indestructible value, which the State must not impair, but rather safeguard. The destiny of man and the different social activities in their proper functioning—such as marriage, the family, the nation, and culture — constitute an irremovable limit of the State which it cannot with impunity transgress. A State which destroys human personality or human associations, or subordinates them to its own ends, is therefore

incompatible with the Christian understanding of life. The State ought, on the contrary, to employ its resources to ensure that human freedom should find growing expression in the service of the neighbour and should not be used according to the prompting of natural inclination for self-assertion and irresponsible behaviour. In this task it cannot dispense with the cooperation of the Church. It is, therefore, in no sense an attempt to meddle with what does not belong to it, but a simple act of obedience to God Who is righteous and loving, when the Church, so far as circumstances allow it, becomes the champion of true human freedom in cooperation with the State and when necessary in criticism of its measures.

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STUDY ONE

CHURCH AND STATE IN THE WORLD TODAY

STUDY: REPORT ON CHURCH AND STATE:

"I. Introduction" (page 7).

"II. Standpoint" (§1, 2, 3—page 7).

Longer Report: "I. The Present Situation" (page 13).

The attention which Oxford gave to the relation of Church and State is a reflection of the concern which discerning Christians feel the world over at the growing power of the State and the tendency everywhere apparent among governments to extend their authority over areas of life which have hitherto been left largely to private initiative. This tendency appears not only in countries which have abandoned democratic institutions and accepted the rule of a dictator, but also in countries where parliamentary government still survives and individual liberty is prized.

This tendency is likely to continue. Even granting that the present causes of its extension are in part personal and transient, due to the emergence of powerful personalities under the strain of political and economic crises, they appear to be in the main of a permanent nature. The most important are the increased power which modern science has put in the hands of individuals and groups and the closer contact between peoples which has been made possible by modern methods of communication. This concentration of power and this increasing unification are likely to increase rather than to diminish, and if we are wise we shall shape our policy accordingly.

While there is always danger in the extension of power by whomsoever exercised, there is nothing in the enlarging activity of the State as such to alarm us provided the aims which the State sets itself are worthy aims and the methods it follows in pursuing them are consistent with the freedom which is essential to an effective Christian witness. The growing concern which the governments of many countries are showing for the provision of social security, the relief of unemployment, and the more equitable distribution of wealth are all to the good. What is disturbing is the fact that in many cases these worthy aims are associated with others less desirable and are pursued by methods which not only are inconsistent with the liberty of the individual citizen but take no account of the legitimate aims and needs of other countries. And even more serious from our Christian point of view is the fact that in not a few countries they are associated with an anti- or at least a non-Christian, philosophy which has brought the government in question into direct conflict with the Church in that country. It is necessary only to refer to the tension which exists between Church and State in Russia, Germany, and Japan.

These conditions of acute tension have their explanation in part in the historical antecedents. We must remember that measured by the chronology of history our American ideal of a free church in a free state is of very recent origin. It is at most a century and a half old. For the greater part of Christian history Church and State have existed in intimate union, the Church (and this means in each case one particular form or branch of the Church) recognizing the state as the divinely appointed agency of government, and the State in its turn recognizing the Church as an established institution which has the right to call upon the State to enforce its decisions.

While we protest against the present encroachments upon Christian liberty by certain governments, we must not forget that when the Church was in power it too often abused its prerogatives and more than once in history (notably at the Reformation) churches in search of liberty have turned to the State for protection against an established Church.

It is clear, then, that in discussing the situation between Church and State we must have in mind the particular historical situation with which we have to do. In the words of the Report, we have to distinguish between "(a) States and countries with a predominantly Christian population; (b) States and countries with a population which is chiefly or at least largely dechristianized; (c) States and countries where (as in the so-called mission field) Christianity appears as the religion of a minority in a country with a non-Christian civilization; and again between (d) Churches which are either completely or to a certain extent organized independently of the State; and (e) Churches which are established"—that is, recognized by law as having a position of privilege and prestige.

Representatives of all these types of Church-State relationships were present at Oxford and the problem before the Conference was to discover what was the essential Christian attitude as to the relation of Church and State, what was the duty of each particular church toward the government of its own country, and what common responsibility the churches of the world had to their fellow-Christians in countries where the State denies the liberty which is essential for the freedom of the Church.

Three issues emerged from the mass of material laid before the Section which seemed of greatest importance: (1) that of the Christian view of the sanction of the State, or in other words of the place the State ought to occupy in the Christian philosophy of life; (2) that of the responsibility of the Church to the State, or in other words of the nature and extent of the loyalty which the State has a right to ask of the Church; (3) that of the liberty which is essential to the witness of the Church, or in other words what is the point at which it may be necessary for the Church to affirm its independence over against the State. A few words as to each may serve as a commentary on the text of the Report and as an introduction to the studies which follow.

An explanation should be added here as to the standpoint from which

the Section approached the consideration of these issues. That standpoint reflected the tension of which we have already spoken. On the one hand, each member of the Conference was there as a member of a particular church, "congregational, denominational, national, free, or established, or of some other form of Christian society in which the life of one Church finds varying expression." But at the same time all were conscious of being members of "the Church as the body of Christ, the universal, supra-national fellowship which he is calling into being by his word and Spirit, or in the words of the Apostles' Creed, the holy, catholic Church."

How that one universal Church was to be related to the various bodies of which it was composed, the Oxford Conference did not attempt to determine. That, it was thought, was the primary responsibility of the Edinburgh Conference. But that such a relationship existed and needed definition was the common assumption of the Conference as a whole. What this conviction may mean for the life of the Church universal, and more especially for the duty of the American churches, will form the subject of our concluding study.

On one point there was general agreement. Whatever conclusion we may reach as to the Christian attitude toward the State, it must be from the Church in this dual sense that we take our departure. We were citizens, all of us, and we hoped loyal citizens, of the different countries to which we belonged. But we were Christians at the same time, and it was from our position as Christians that we approached the different questions at issue as to the relation of Church and State.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Wherein does the present attitude of the State toward the Church differ from that of earlier ages? How will you account for the increasing tension in countries like Russia, Germany, Japan? How far do you think the Church must share responsibility for the development of this tension?

2. At what points do the activities of government touch the interests of the churches: (a) in the local community, (b) in the state, (c) in the country-at-large? Give illustrations in your own community.

3. How far does the phrase "separation of Church and State" accurately describe the situation in this country? In what ways does the Church occupy a privileged position in the United States as contrasted with Russia or Germany? In what sense can America be called a Christian country?

4. How do the problems raised by the existence of totalitarian states affect the missionary policy of the Christian churches? To what extent, if at all, ought missionaries to rely upon the protection of their governments in their effort to preach the Gospel in other countries?

STUDY TWO

THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE STATE

STUDY: REPORT ON CHURCH AND STATE:

"1. The Distinctive Functions of Church and State" (page 9).

"2. Duties of the Church to the State" (page 10).

By the State in the most comprehensive sense the Conference understood the political community, or in other words society organized under forms of law. The word "state" is a narrower term than "nation," which includes also the economic and cultural relations of a people. It is broader than "government," though it is through government that the functions of modern states are discharged. As the expression and organ of political life the State is the most inclusive of all the social units within a particular geographical area and has certain functions to discharge on behalf of all the people: namely, the maintenance of order, the securing of justice, the defense against attack from without, and the promotion of welfare within. But to the Christian the State is more than a human institution. It is one of the instruments through which God is working out his divine plan of salvation. Yet at the same time as a human institution governed by fallible and finite men it is imperfect and may become a powerful instrument of evil.

This dual estimate of the State as at once divinely ordained and humanly imperfect goes back to the New Testament. To St. Paul, carrying on his missionary work under the aegis of the Roman Empire, the State is the God-given instrument, to which obedience is due. To the writer of the Book of Revelation, living in times of persecution, it has become anti-Christ.

While agreeing that the State, as the guardian of order, of security, and of justice, has a God-given function to perform, Christians have differed in their view of the nature and ground of that function, and they differ today. Some emphasize the purely negative character of the State as a necessary barrier against the destruction and disintegration caused by sin, others its positive function as an agent in realizing the highest social welfare. Both of these views were represented in the Conference; the former chiefly among the Continentals, the latter among the British and Americans. Yet in spite of this difference in theory, it was possible to secure a wide measure of agreement as to the Christian duty to the State and the obligation of the State toward the Church.

The duty of the Church toward the State was defined as being in general one of loyalty, obedience, and cooperation; the duty of the State toward the Church as that of maintaining the conditions in which the Church could fulfil its God-given function of worship, witness, evangelism, and service. Where such conditions were not present the Conference declared that it was the duty of the Church to criticize and if need be to resist the State, as it is doing in many parts of the world today.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the view taken of the State in the New Testament? (e.g., Romans 13:1-4; Revelation 17:7-14.) In what ways do the contrasted views of St. Paul and the writer of Revelation reappear in the later history? How do you interpret Jesus' words, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God?" (Matthew 22:21).

2. What attitude should Christians take toward the State? In what sense is it proper to speak of it as a divine creation? What different views have been held in Christian history of the divine sanction of the State? How far do you share any one of these views, and for what reason?

3. What do you regard as the distinctive function of the State as contrasted with the Church? At what points do their interests overlap? Illustrate this overlapping in connection with: (a) the maintenance of order, (b) the securing of justice, (c) the promotion of social welfare.

4. How far do you think the increasing activity of the State in social affairs, e.g., unemployment, old age pensions, the care of the sick, etc., is legitimate and desirable? What bearing is this increasing state activity likely to have upon the social activity of the Church?

5. How far and in what sense should the Christian enter politics? What is the difference between the responsibility of individual Christians and of the Church in its organized capacity (a) for forming public opinion, (b) for definite political action, as in supporting legislation, or candidates for office?

STUDY THREE

THE LIBERTY ESSENTIAL TO THE CHURCH

STUDY: Report on Church and State:

"3. The Freedom of the Church" (page 11).

Longer Report: "The Christian View of Freedom and Authority" (pages 20-24).

Much attention was given by the Section to the question of the liberty which the Church requires in order to perform its function and what responsibility it has, if any, to serve as guide and spokesman for human liberty in general. On this latter point the delegates were agreed that the Church had no right to claim privileges for itself which were not granted to other bodies of citizens. Among the duties which the Church owes the State was specified that "of holding before men in all their legislation and administration those principles which make for the upholding of the dignity of man, who was made in the image of God" and also of following "with sympathetic interest the fortune of those Christians and non-Christians alike who are victims of cruelty and oppression" and of doing "what it can to secure for them a treatment compatible with the dignity of their human personality as children of God."

As essential conditions necessary to the Church's fulfiling its primary duty of witness, the Section listed the following: "(a) freedom to determine its faith and creed; (b) freedom of public and private worship, preaching and teaching; (c) freedom from any imposition by the State of religious ceremonies and forms of worship; (d) freedom to determine the nature of its government and the qualifications of its ministers and members, and, conversely, the freedom of the individual to join the Church to which he feels called; (e) freedom to control the education of its ministers, to give religious instruction to its youth, and to provide for adequate development of their religious life; (f) freedom of Christian service and missionary activity, both home and foreign; (g) freedom to co-operate with other churches; (h) freedom to use such facilities, open to all citizens or associations, as will make possible the accomplishment of these ends, as, e.g., the ownership of property and the collection of funds."

While recognizing that in fact such freedom can exist for churches which as established have "an organic or otherwise special connection with the State" as well as "in churches organized as free associations under the general laws of a country," it was the conviction of the Conference—a conviction concurred in by members of the established churches present—that when such liberty is denied to the Church by the State it may become the duty of its ministers and members "to do all in their power to secure this freedom, even at the cost of disestablishment."

In thus claiming the right of independence even at the cost of disobedience the members of the churches present were well aware of their limitations and inadequacy. No note was more in evidence throughout the Conference than the note of penitence. "If as churches we are deeply disquieted by the political development of our age and our time, we have to acknowledge a large share of responsibility. . . . We have not expressed our faith in the redeeming Cross of Christ in terms of our social relations. We have accepted without clear protest existing social divisions. In like manner we recognize that churches have at times substituted for the true totalitarianism of Christ, which requires that every activity and every relation should be subject to the Will of God, a forced totalitarianism, political in character. They have too often been far more concerned for their own security and prestige in this world than for fulfiling their Lord's commission and serving mankind in the spirit of self-sacrificing love. We today acknowledge with deep humility our share in this guilt."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How far do you agree with the statement in the Report as to the liberty which is essential to the Church? How far are these liberties enjoyed by the churches under our government? Is there danger that they may be curtailed? Why do you hold this opinion?

2. On what ground do you base the claim of the Church to enjoy such liberty? Is it to be regarded as a special privilege granted to the Church as distinct from other institutions, or does it grow out of the liberty which belongs to man as man? Is the Christian Church entitled to any more liberty than any other religious body?

3. What instances do you see in this country of a threat to religious liberty on the part of individuals or groups? What in your judgment is the responsibility of the Church in such cases?

4. Does the fact that church property is tax free put any special responsibility on the Church? This exemption is sometimes attacked; how can it be defended?

5. What responsibility have the Christians of America for the protection of their fellow-Christians in countries where they are denied the liberty which we enjoy here: e.g., in Germany, in Japan? In what ways should the responsibility affirmed in the Oxford statement (4,e) be discharged?

STUDY FOUR
CONSEQUENCES FOR CHRISTIAN DUTY

STUDY: REPORT ON CHURCH AND STATE:

"4. The Present Tasks of the Church" (page 12).

It is against a background of confession and repentance that the Conference approached the consideration of the duties of the Church toward the State. "The primary duty of the Church to the State is to be the Church namely, to witness for God, to preach His Word, to confess the faith before men, to teach both young and old to observe the divine commandments, and to serve the nation and the State by proclaiming the Will of God as the supreme standard to which all human wills must be subject and all human conduct must conform. These functions of worship, preaching, teaching, and ministry, the Church cannot renounce whether the State consent or not."

From this responsibility certain specific duties follow for the church both in the individual nation and in its relation to other churches and nations. The former include both co-operation and criticism. And this not only by Christians acting in their individual capacity, but by the Church as a Christian community. "The Church can serve the State in no better way than by illustrating in its own life the kind of life which is God's Will for society as a whole. Only in the measure that it seeks to realize this mission is it in a position to rebuke the State for its sins and failures for which both individual Christians and the Church in its organized capacity have been in no small measure responsible."

In addition to the duties which the Church owes to the State in its individual capacity as the government of a particular people, it is the Church's responsibility as a universal society to hold ever before the State the fact that it is not itself the ulimate political unit, but "a member of a family of nations with international relations and duties which it is the responsibility not only of individual Christians but also of the churches to affirm and to promote."

In order that it may be able to discharge these duties effectively it is further the duty of the Church to "create within the local community, the nation, and the world such agencies of co-operative action as shall make it possible for them to discharge effectively such tasks as can be done in common."

It is not to be wondered at that taking this view of the responsibility of the Church as an ecumenical society the Council should have all but unanimously approved the plan for a World Council of Churches. If this plan is carried out, a body thoroughly representative in character will meet at stated times for the consideration of matters of common concern and furnish the agency through which in time of crisis the common mind of the churches can find united expression.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What does the Conference mean by saying that the primary duty of the Church to the State is to "be the Church?" How far do you agree with this statement? What is the nature of the service which the Church renders to the State in its own distinctively religious sphere?

2. What further duties does the Church owe to the State: (a) in its organized capacity, (b) as a society of individual citizens? What problems arise from the fact that the same person is often a member both of State and of Church?

3. How can the Church serve the State in the educational sphere: (a) through the formation of public opinion, (b) by direct criticism of unchristian tendencies, (c) by the training of its own members in their political responsibility?

4. In what sense has the Church special responsibilities: (a) in its organized capacity, (b) as a group of Christian citizens? At what points, if any, does resistance to the authority of the State become a Christian duty?

SUGGESTED READING

on

CHURCH AND STATE

The text of the two Reports.

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Keller, Adolf, **Church and State on the European Continent,** London, Epworth Press, 1936.

Paton, William, **Christianity in the Eastern Conflicts: A Study in Christianity, Communism, and Nationalism in Asia,** Chicago, Willett, Clark & Co., 1937.

Van Dusen, Henry P., **Church and State in the Modern World,** New York, Harper Brothers, 1937.

Brown, William Adams, **The Christian Attitude Toward the State.** An Address delivered at the Biennial Institute of the Movement for World Christianity at Rochester, New York, May 26, 1937. Available in mimeographed form from the Universal Christian Council, New York.

OXFORD CONFERENCE SERIES ON CHURCH, COMMUNITY, AND STATE

(Nos. II - VII will be published during 1938.)

I. The Church and Its Function in Society.

By Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft and Dr. J. H. Oldham.

"Challenging and arresting, and will shake us all out of our complacency if we can but see in it a call of God . . . I therefore urge everyone to secure and to read this volume." 238 pages. $2.00.

Church of England Newspaper

II. The Christian Understanding of Man.

By Prof. T. E. Jessop, Prof. R. E. Calhoun, Prof. N. N. Alexeiev, Prof. Emil Brunner, Pastor Pierre Maury, the Rev. Austin Farrer, Prof. W. M. Horton.

III. The Kingdom of God and History.

By Prof. C. H. Dodd, Dr. Edwyn Bevan, Dr. Christopher Dawson, Prof. Eugene Lyman, Prof. Paul Tillich, Prof. H. Wendland, Prof. H. G. Wood.

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By Dr. M. Dibelius, Prof. John Bennett, The Archbishop of York, Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr, the Rev. H. H. Farmer, Dr. W. Wiesner.

V. Church and Community.

By Prof. E. E. Aubrey, Prof. E. Barker, M. Björkquist, Dr. H. Lilje, Prof. S. Zankov, Prof. Paul Douglass, Prof. K. S. Latourette. M. Boegner.

VI. Church, Community and State in relation to Education.

By Prof. F. Clarke, Paul Monro, Prof. W. Zenkovsky, C. E. Morris, J. W. D. Smith, Prof. P. H. Kohnstamm.

VII. The Universal Church and the World of Nations.

By the Marquess of Lothian, Prof. Sir Alfred Zimmern, Dr. O. von der Gablentz, John Foster Dulles, Pastor W. Menn, the Rev. V. A. Demant, Dr. Otto Piper, Canon C. E. Raven.

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